

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 AGR-05 /096 W

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P R 231503Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORTY 5565

INFO AMCONGEN ASMARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 8836

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: URBAN LAND REFORM PROCLAMATION IMMINENT?

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. FOLLOWING RADIO ETHIOPIA AMHARIC NEWSCAST, 1400 HOURS, LOCAL JULY 23, THE STATION BROADCAST AN AMHARIC LANGUAGE ANNOUNCEMENT TO ACCOMPANIMENT OF ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION'S FAVORITE TUNE "ETHIOPIA TIKDEM." GIST OF COMMENTARY IS THAT ESTIMATED 6000 ADDIS LANDLORDS EXPLOITING HOUSING NEEDS OF 1.1 MILLION INHABITANTS OF THIS CAPITAL. LANDLORDS ARE NOT BUILDING NEW HOUSING FAST ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE THE ESTIMATED 8 PERCENT PER ANNUM GROWTH OF CAPITAL'S POPULATION. CROWDING AND SPREADING SLUMS ARE THE RESULT. LANDLORDS ARE FATTENING ON THE MISERY OF THE PEOPLE. AS RURAL LAND REFORM HAS BEEN PROCLAIMED TO SATISFY THE REQUIREMRNTS OF SOCIALIST JUSTICE, IT IS NOW NECESSARY TO CONCENTRATE ON THE URBAN LAND PROBLEM. THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM LIES IN THE BREAKING OF THE

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BOLD OF LANDLORDS UPON TENANTS. THE ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION IS NOT

HALF-HEARTED AND WILL NOT STOP HALF WAY TO ITS GOALS. AS FARMERS' RIGHTS ARE NOW BEING SAFEGUARDED, THE RIGHTS OF URBAN WORKERS WILL LIKEWISE SOON BE PROTECTED. ETHIOPIA'S URBAN WORKING CLASS SHALL EQUITABLY PARTICIPATE IN THE PRODUCTIVE CAPABILITIES OF THE NATION'S CITIES BUILT ON THEIR SWEAT. END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: THE ANNOUNCEMENT CAPS STEADILY RISING CRESCENDO OF MEDIA OUTPUT IN FAVOR OF URBAN LAND REFORM OVER LAST SEVERAL WEEKS. IN ITS WAKE ETHIOPIAN OBSERVER UNANIMOUSLY CONSIDER THAT THE URBAN LAND REFORM PROCLAMATION WILL LIKELY BE ISSUED VERY SHORTLY. THIS JUDGEMENT IS CONFIRMED BY PRESSURE FROM LANDLORDS TO RESPOSSESS THEIR BEST HOUSES AS THEY EXPECT TO LOSE AT LEAST THE RIGHT TO DISPOSE OF THE INCOME FROM SECOND OR THIRD RESIDENCES. THERE ARE OTHER SURFACE INDICATIONS, SUCH AS EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS AT MOD, WHICH REMIND US OF THE SIMILAR SIGNS WHICH PRECEDED THE NATIONALIZATION OF RURAL LANDS.

3. WE DO NOT WISH TO ANTICIPATE THE TENOR AND SUBSTANCE OF THE EXPECTED URBAN LAND REFORM PROCLAMATION. HOWEVER, THE DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE IN MIND THAT ETHIOPIA'S CIVIL AND MILITARY MANAGERIAL/ MIDDLE CLASS SEEMS FAR MORE LIKELY TO BE WIDELY IMMEDIATELY AND DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY URBAN LAND REFORM THAN IT WAS BY THE PRAGMATIC IMPLEMENTATION OF RURAL LAND NATIONALIZATION. LOOKING BACK ON THE LATTER, ALTHOUGH SOME INVESTORS DID TAKE LOSSES, SIZEABLE NUMBERS OF TENANTS BENEFITED, A SMALL NUMBER OF LARGE LANDOWNERS SUFFERED, AND THE POPULATION IN AREAS IN WHICH SMALL-HOLDING AND COMMUNAL OWNERSHIP PREDOMINATE S MANAGED THUS FAR LARGELY TO PRESERVE ITS RIGHTS DE FACTO. TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, ETHIOPIAN SOCIALISM HAS THUS FAR HAD ONLY LIMITED IMPACT UPON THE MATERIAL INTERESTS OF THIS COUNTRY'S SMALL BUT POLITICALLY POTENT MIDDLE CLASS. WITH THE APPARENTLY IMMINENT PROMULGATION OF URBAN LAND REFORM THERE WILL BE INCREASED STRESSES ON THIS SOCIETY IN THAT BOURGEOIS MATERIAL INTERESTS MAY BE WIDELY AFFECTED. HUMMEL

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